

# Chaffee Wildlife Sanctuary

## Lyme, New Hampshire



illustration c. Joan Waltermire

The Town of Lyme acquired its very first wildlife preserve in 1977 from Guy and Esther Nichols, with the help of the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund and donations from many Lyme families. The sanctuary protects 21 acres of grassland and riparian (stream-side) habitat along Trout Brook, which flows into Post Pond, 450' of frontage on Post Pond, and Clay Brook, which flows out of the pond and on to the Connecticut River. In 2000 the CC added 2 acres at the mouth of Pinnacle Brook, just south of the pond's public boat access.

### History

This property was part of Peter Post's original 1000-acre 18th century farm. His two homesteads still stand on Route 10 at N. Thetford Rd. Post's saw and gristmill on Clay Brook created a millpond which probably inundated the lower lying parts of the present sanctuary.

The Conservation Commission dedicated the property in 1988 as the Robert G. Chaffee Sanctuary, to honor its founder and first chair. Dr. Chaffee was known for his role in the creation of the Montshire Museum and for his devotion to the preservation of nature.

### Wildlife

The Chaffee Sanctuary provides food and cover for many creatures, including beavers which taunt their human neighbors with their remarkable stream engineering capabilities. Riparian habitat offers a rest stop for birds migrating along the Connecticut River corridor, including Arctic Terns. Kestrels and bluebirds use the open grassland, and others, from the familiar red-winged blackbird to the secretive bittern and handsome wood duck, frequent the wetlands. The Sanctuary is a stop on the newly created Connecticut River Birding Trail. The CC's detailed list of wildlife sightings for Post Pond is available at the town office.

### Management

The Lyme Conservation Commission manages the Chaffee Wildlife Sanctuary to

- protect wildlife habitat and native riparian vegetation, particularly for birds
- guard water quality in the brooks and pond
- provide low-impact public recreational access to wetlands and trails.

The grassland area is mowed every few years to retain habitat for ground-nesting birds, while a woody

riparian buffer is protected along the streams. To allow better filtration for Pinnacle Brook as it enters Post Pond, the CC is restoring the pond-side parcel to its natural wetland state by planting native shrubs.

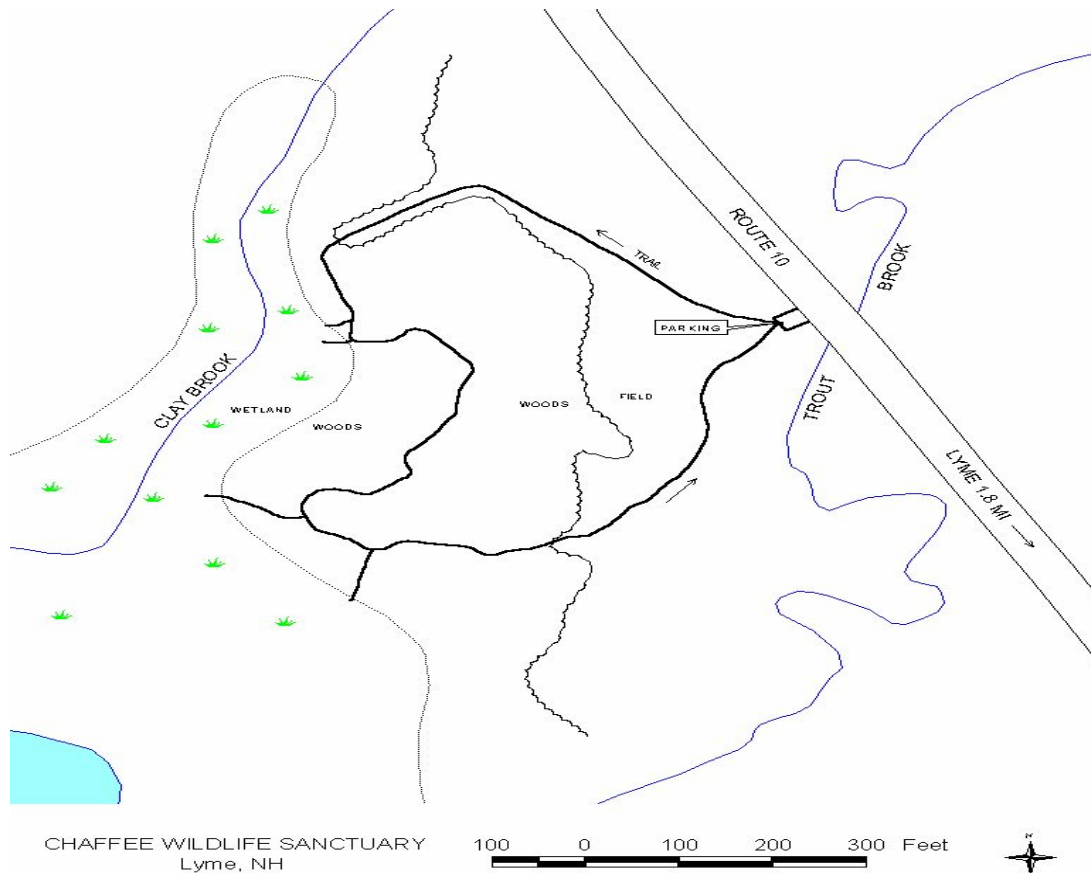
Before stream dynamics were as well understood as they are today, Balch Field was created by draining Trout Brook's flood plain and confining the brook to the north side of a new dike. Over time, the brook objected and attempted to reclaim its territory. In 1999, with the help of the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service, the CC installed a tree revetment to stabilize the streambank, in the first use of this innovative, stream-friendly technique in Grafton County. Native trees and shrubs help hold the bank, shade the water for fish, and provide cover for wildlife.

### Please...

Foot travel only. Dogs are welcome if under the control of their owners. Leave plants where you found them, and please carry out what you carry in. Hunting and trapping are not permitted in the sanctuary. Bring binoculars!

### Directions

From Lyme Village, drive north 1.8 miles on Route 10, past the entrance to Post Pond. The Sanctuary is identified with a large sign on the left (west) side of the road. Park off the shoulder. Trails are marked with orange and aluminum markers.



Lyme Conservation Commission, 2002